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INTEGRITY



Holiness for Lay People

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EDITORIAL



CHRIST became man to make us godlike. In the Offertory prayer at Mass we beg that "He will make us partakers of the divine nature Who vouchsafed to become partaker of our human nature." What gives us the courage to dare to ask to become like God, to share His goodness, His perfection? The words of Christ Himself: "Be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

The call to perfection is meant for everyone. No Christian is supposed to be a laggard on the road to holiness. With the deepening realization that lay people as well as priests are supposed to be apostolic has come the realization that lay people too are called to be saints. Holiness and apostolicity rise and fall together. That is why this month's issue is really the companion to last month's issue on the apostolate. It can be considered the other side of the same coin.

For the layman has the responsibility for the temporal order, the obligation to restore family life, work, business, community affairs, recreation, politics and so on to Christ; in other words he has the obligation to be *apostolic*. But while he is sanctifying society he must also sanctify himself. He must act upon the temporal order to make it holy, but conversely the temporal order should act upon him to make him holy. For he cannot achieve his sanctity apart from his workaday life. Holiness is not synonymous with pious exercises, nor with a tiny fragment of the day given to God. Rather holiness is measured by charity, by love, and if we wish to be holy, love must motivate and inform our whole day, our very occupation.

The world presents many obstacles to holiness; sometimes they are only apparent obstacles that can be turned to advantage. Even those who are sincerely striving for holiness admit that the formulation of a spirituality for lay people is far from completion. The desire for holiness is there, the way is obscure, but we need not be discouraged. God will reveal it in time.

And even in the desire there is joy. In the Infant Savior we behold the reason for our mirth. As we wish our readers Merry Christmas we repeat the words of the old carol:

"Aye and therefore be merry, set sorrow aside.
Christ Jesus, our Savior, was born on this tide."

THE EDITOR

“He Married an Angel”



WHAT happens when the wife of an average fellow gets religion? Mrs. Candle (that's a pen name) gives pointers on how to refrain from driving a husband to drink. Incidentally, we are sorry that we don't have a companion article written by a husband—preferably one who is spiritually miles ahead of his wife. Any volunteers?

Susan Candle: Now that so many things have been written and said about Christian marriage, and examples and patterns have been cited, and the Christian married who are moved to write about it have written about it, the burning question for a lot of the married—especially wives, who seem to worry about such burning questions—seems to be: “Fine, but what about *my* marriage? *My* marriage doesn't begin to measure up to these idylls. If being a saint depends, for the married, on the pursuit of the spiritual life *together*, planting gardens, joining study groups, reciting Commandments, perfect and mutual abandonment to the will of God—there's no hope for us. All we seem to share is roof, bed, board, and our children, with struggles and problems thrown in, and very little else. Now and then we meet in a period of spiritual sympathy and I think we're off to a start, and then the whole thing collapses. What does it all mean? Is it my fault because I chose the wrong man? How could I have been so convinced he was right? Or was he right and now he's changed? Maybe I was too immature and now I've changed. Or did God play a trick on us? Did we choose with our hearts instead of our heads?”

And nowhere in any of the examples and patterns so many women search in hope of finding one for them, do they find one that fits. All look too good to be true, and far from suspecting their authors of deliberate fabrication the women who read them decide that whether or not one is permitted to be mediocre in the life of the lay apostolate, for such as themselves there is no choice. Mediocrity for the married seems to be inevitable for all but the chosen few, blessed apparently by some special grace at the time of choosing, smiled on by providence in the appearance of the right and perfect mate at the right and perfect time.

A word in defense of authors. In the first place the spiritual revival or call to the lay apostolate, whatever you want to call it, is still quite new. The exuberance that goes with discovering the role of the married in it is such heady wine that for those married who write about it, the writing is apt to be heavily loaded on the side of the new joy discovered, the new concepts revealed, to the neglect of the all too familiar imperfections that still beset marriage. And for the Christian writer there is another difficulty in the form of discretion. Prudence puts great demands on the man or woman who, asked to write about Christian marriage, must choose between drawing it in big positive terms of his own and his mate's experience in spiritual growth, and sacrificing what inspirational message he may be able to pass along by the revelation of his own and his mate's human weaknesses in an effort to approximate reality. It's all very well for those who pay no commitment to the demands of charity to write "refreshingly frank exposés" of married life, for women to discuss their husbands' faithfulness or gambling or drinking, or for men to discuss their wives' preoccupation with clothes or money or birth control. But a Christian worth his salt can justify the betrayal of his spouse only by the most innocuous and mildly amusing faults for publication for fear of running headlong into the serious sin of scandal. And the net result seems to be an inevitable distortion even the most honest attempts to paint a picture of Christian marriage. People seeking patterns are eternal optimists and rarely read between the lines, and people trying sincerely to communicate about patterns almost always assume that what is left out will be read between the lines.

THINGS can do it

Spiritual growth for the married does not depend, and never will, on anything but the soul's hunger for God and in that respect differs in no way from spiritual growth in any other vocation. A house or garden or car, or lack of them, or homemade bread

or Advent wreath or short breviary or any other *thing* can make a man a saint. And it's too bad if, in our enthusiasm for the right accessories, we give the impression that these things are going to make the big difference. They make a difference, but not *the* difference, and the preponderance of things written about the accessories seems too often to assume that of course everyone understands that the one big essential, still, is the holiness of the state. Unhappily the impression far too many are left with is that plain marriage is *not* enough, and that unless things hew pretty well to the onward and upward direction for both partners at the same time all that is left is the best of a bad bargain. We have written about *ideal* and slightly overplayed our hand because we have given the impression that this is the whole of our experience. For the sake of prudence we have omitted the things that fall short of the ideal and given the impression they do not exist.

Women, because they are more concerned with expression of love, with emotion and atmosphere, fall into this particular trap more easily than men. Until recently there has not been too much clarification for women of what women are made of. Maybe it is not sugar and spice and all things nice, but it is as different from what men are made of as sticks and snails and puppy-dogs' tails, and it would help all women a lot to be able to see how different. Then they can begin to see how vain is their sighing after "even two minds with but a single thought." The difficulty starts because in the beginning two minds do have but a single thought—mutually shared desire. It's after the desire has ceased to predominate that the puzzling differences begin, and develop in degrees from differences in tastes about relatively unimportant things to wide gaps in interests and pursuits and even, in many marriages, differences about responsibility and duty and moral behavior. In some cases it does go as far as moral behavior, as any priest hearing confessions well knows. That this is so even in marriages between two fairly enlightened Christians proves that knowing what is right is still no guarantee of doing what is right. The fact that a man is a member of the Mystical Body is no deterrent to the Devil.

wives acquiring spirituality

It must give the Devil particular delight to muddy up the issues in a marriage—especially if one of the issues is the newly awakened spiritual growth of the woman. Maybe one of the reasons they are easily muddled on this score is that so much of the material dealing with spiritual growth has been presented from the feminine point of view, with emphasis on virtues which come easily (or anyway easier, because the capacity for them has been

uilt in) for women: self-sacrifice, service, devotion, love, compassion and so on. The mistake many wives make is to respond to the call to a deeper spiritual life through these channels and expect their husbands to do likewise. They grow a bit in abandonment, develop a taste for frugal poverty, and are upset because their husbands are still concerned over security. They do not stop to reflect that it is the nature of a man to be protector and provider; the drive to provide security is part of his very being.

Physical love they give willingly out of their new understanding of its sacramental beauty, and they are shattered to find that often the desire they respond to seems nothing more than hunger to be satisfied, with little of the mystical quality that is part of a woman's giving of her love. Even the bearing of children, so mysterious and satisfying an experience for a body designed to carry them and a heart quick to expand and savor every day and week of even the most trying pregnancy, can become a matter of serious discord. To the prospective fourth- or fifth- or sixth-time mother worried over finances, the approaching child sometimes seems to mean more in terms of added expense and increased responsibility than dazzling immortality. "I've got four wonderful kids I wouldn't take a million for, but I wouldn't give a nickel for another."

The wives are drawn to a more active participation in liturgical life, daily Mass, daily Communion, and are horrified to see that their husbands can take just so much of it and, past that point, prefer to leave it alone. "You live your spiritual life and let me live mine." All these things and more stab at women who want nothing more than to grow in God and find new and keener happiness for their husbands by sharing the growth. They try to communicate what they have learned, and when it meets with little or no response they are lost and hurt and resign themselves to making the best of a sorry marriage, an innocent mismating, and continuing the rest of the journey spiritually alone.

Men have a different way

Perhaps there are marriages where none of these things have been problems. Perhaps there are couples who have walked the whole way hand in hand with never a cross word between them—so, they are rare. The married saints are still not common and would take the wisdom and holiness of a pair of saints to meet with perfect understanding every one of the clashes inevitable between two creatures created so different in their natures.

Women err—often innocently—in their desire for perfection of themselves and their husbands by expecting that the *way* will

be identical. Circumscribed by the walls of their homes, intense occupied with their duties as wives and mothers, they are often unable to project themselves to the totally different problems of their husbands who go off every day into a world they no longer know. It is a happy complement, the contrast in the nature of the sexes—the man busy providing, planning, protecting, the woman creating harmony in the home he provides, bearing and raising the children, listening, sympathizing, encouraging. The combination of two such natures in one sacrament makes, indeed, another one—more complete and perfect for this vocation than a combination of two planners, providers, protectors or two harmonizers, listeners, sympathizers. And because this is so, it follows that the framework of the vocation does describe a way for the two of them, which is identical—but which still subdivides to be different on the intimate level of their male and female natures.

A crude example of the difference can be seen in house-hunting. They are both interested in finding the same thing—the right house—but when they look at a house together, he goes down into the cellar to inspect the pipes, the heating plant, the foundation while she is busy deciding which bedroom would be right for whom, where she will put her furniture and whether the house as a whole fits the life she dreams of making for her family. If he calls her downstairs to look at the furnace, she looks and says, "If you say it's good, dear, then that's fine with me—I don't know a thing about furnaces—but I do wish you'd come up and see the bay in the dining room. My curtains will be perfect there, and I'll plant it's ideal." The difference in the way each looks at the house is no mystery, and causes no arguments, because it is a matter of tangibles. The same difference holds in regard to the approach to the spiritual life—but it's harder to understand because here they are dealing with intangibles.

Many women, when they understand this better, must admit honestly that in their drive for sameness in their own and their husbands' approach to the spiritual life, they have often done more damage than good to the spiritual advancement of the very ones they love best. Witness the classic retort to a pastor who asked his husband if he realized his wife was practically a saint. "Yes, I suppose so—but do we have to have religion for breakfast, lunch, and dinner?"

no sense of humor

In marriages where this sort of thing is a problem, the typically spiritually-hungry wife reads avidly all she can get her hands on, rejoices in her discovery of a new world of spiritual values and se-

out enthusiastically to transform herself and her husband. Unable to see that the very sound of the words "the little way" might leave him cold, her enthusiasm to communicate what she has discovered is soon dampened. She ceases the attempt to reveal such a way to him but at the same time is unable to cease measuring him by it. Picking up a pin for the love of God may be sheer joy and sweetness to her, but she fails to see that her husband possibly does not even see pins and if he does, can't get very excited about picking them up.

Why blindness to her own faults sets in at this time it is hard to say, but that is usually what happens. She becomes acutely aware of how inadequate she is in the eyes of God, yet is increasingly baffled at how her husband can find anything lacking in her. She tries harder than ever to please him—he might at least show some appreciation instead of accepting it as his due. She demands fewer things, sighs less after the world—perhaps somewhat audibly, with explanations of why she sighs less—and he begins to wear the strained look of a man who has just discovered his wife should have been a nun. The more her hunger for God grows, the more he seems to wish she would hunger after Him less and substitute instead the return of her sense of humor. And if she points out that she has not lost her sense of humor, that it is merely elevated and no longer so earthy, he is apt to grunt that he liked it earthy and if this new elevation is humor—then it ain't funny. If her prayer life increases, her devotions, spiritual reading, visits to church, she definitely observes that he, if busy at all, is busy only at paring his down. Their home becomes increasingly a "little temple of God" to her but he seems drawn to spend more time away from it. And in her hurt and bewilderment the best she can come up with is to "offer it up."

nice dodge

Do not misunderstand. This is not meant to belittle "offering up." But in a very real way, for people with hurt feelings, offering up is a nice dodge for avoiding self-examination. There are some things we are better off hugging to ourselves. Especially for women pursuing perfection at full gallop, indiscriminate offering up often leads farther and farther off center. There are cruelties and injustices which can be borne no other way (also such things as celery crunching, knuckle cracking, and toast crumbs in the aleo), but real spiritual growth is not forthcoming without real self-examination. In proportion to her effort to know herself, to see the puniness of her own reflection cast against the mirror of Christ, many a woman has learned to laugh at her fancied miseries,

to see herself far more accurately as having dished out the same kind of misunderstanding according to a different rule of thumb.

For instance, for women who don't drink, married to men who do but are still not qualified alcoholics, the art of keeping hands and sharp tongues off is painfully learned. And for women who don't drink and are trying their wings at the art of self-denial, the Devil loves to spotlight brightest of all the areas of the husbands' over-indulgence, being careful to relegate to a place well down-stage their own addiction, say, to cigarettes and long telephone conversations. The incipient danger in the former marriage outweighs that in the latter, but in terms of time stolen from marital duty, the shirts she doesn't get ironed or the dishes she doesn't wash, all because of a mid-morning break with a cigarette in one hand and the telephone in the other (for all they may be discussing the latest in liturgical living), are as much neglect as the hour he wastes having a quick one with the boys from the office instead of coming home to fix the leak under the kitchen sink. And should he take profane exception one morning to the fact that the buttons are still off his shirt and might not be if she'd cut out most of her gabbing, she is quick to remind him she has not stirred outside her domain for days, is completely devoted to her duty as he well knows and doesn't see how he can criticize her telephoning while he wastes just as much time hanging over bars. Her husband might well reflect (and probably does) that since she is the one who is determined to be a saint, her breach of obedience to duty is relatively far graver than his—who claims to be no more than a nice ordinary slob. And he probably takes two hours for a quick one the next time.

Much as women hate to admit it, if they are really serious about their desire for sanctification, this sort of thing does apply. No man who has not caught the flame is going to be moved one iota closer to the goal by his wife's continually pointing out how far he is away from it. At this point the well-worn joke applies: "What is the definition of a martyr?" "A martyr is someone who is married to a saint." There are more men than you can shake a stick at who go around indulging their weaknesses all because their wives have discovered the spiritual life and are bent on reforming them. For some it is no more than resistance in commonplace ways—a diminishing of courtesy, an increase of profanity, an over-assertion of masterfulness in their treatment of their children. For some it may be more serious. But underneath it all is the determined effort not to be swallowed up by what is fast becoming a smothering display of virtue.

That sanctity does not consist of *displays* of virtue was pretty well proved by the nuns murmuring outside St. Thérèse's door as she lay dying: "What will Reverend Mother ever write about Soeur Thérèse—she has really done nothing." Getting lost in exaggerations of virtues, in the minor details of perfection, and losing sight of the biggest issue of all—that holiness is learning to love to the highest degree—trips so many women up.

aggrieved silence

But there are real hardships as well as fancied ones in marriage, and the spiritual approach is certainly the only way to bear them. The only trouble is that it's not half as easy as it looks. For instance, it is a real discovery to begin to understand the value of silence. But silence in the hands of an aggrieved woman (even justifiably aggrieved) is as much an irritant as her former haranguing. And the husband who is well aware that some neglect or abuse of his is painful to his wife is rarely moved to examine himself contritely by the sight of her weebegone face, surrounded by the deep well of her silence. His reaction is more apt to be, "Dammit, if nobody's going to speak to me at home, I'll go where they will."

Silence is better than quarrels (at least after all possible prudent attempts to settle a disagreement have been tried and failed). But we are supposed to use silence so that God can speak to us. Used this way (minus self-pity) even the most cruel domestic thorns have a way of slowly diminishing as the reality of eternity and God's love begins to take their place.

One woman married to a man whose extreme sense of insecurity moved him to lash out constantly in intolerable displays of temper and criticism, learned the only way to keep her silence from becoming mere wound-licking was to think of something she could do that would please him—a meal she could cook, a pair of slacks she could press, or merely the resolve to sit and watch TV with him all night if he wanted it, although she heartily despised everything he liked. She learned to wrench her mind away from the sting of his injustices and busy it planning an act of love (dry as cinder, but a purer act of love for its dryness) that would help fill up what was wanting at the moment in their union.

they belong together

Of course that is the clue—the oneness of the union. When one member suffers, so does the other—whether the suffering is the kind that is shared, like sickness, shock or loss, or inflicted. The woman who has really terrible pain to suffer in her marriage must keep reminding herself that her own pain is part of the cross which

she must bear, in one form or another, if she is serious about wanting to be a saint—while the sickness of soul that afflicts her marriage is the really great tragedy. The salvation of an imperfect marriage lies in an awareness of the obligation to fill up what is wanting in the weakness of each other. It is the peculiarity of the vocation that neither man nor woman is any longer "whole" alone. "My better half" is no catch phrase for the married, but an accurate description of the spouse one is bound to love better than oneself. Their marriage is a common vessel into which they have poured themselves and there is no longer any way to God but in it.

Understanding this, unhappy women can begin to see the childishness and folly of such indulgences as day-dreaming over husbands that might have been, and also avoid the subtly hidden but dangerous traps to which such indulgences lead. One woman, rueing aloud in the presence of her children her choice of the wrong man instead of the right, so soured the whole concept of marriage for her daughters that she robbed them of even a fair share of optimism when it came their turn to pick mates.

Idle designs for "getting even" are the same kind of folly and grow directly out of the refusal to meet weakness with understanding, injury with forgiveness and love. "If he won't do this—then I'll be darned if I'll do that." One woman who responded to her husband's refusal to accept family responsibility decided to repay in kind by indulging in harmless flirtations. She ended up committing the far worse sin of infidelity, with the final step through divorce court and their two children living with a grandmother.

Succumbing to temptations against loyalty, temptations to seek too frequent balm for wounds by betraying a husband's imperfections to family and friends, not only does not right what is wrong but in the end eats away at the weakened fabric of what love is left. Gradually, from marriage to a man with whom she knows somehow she must reunite herself, hers becomes a marriage to a man whom she feels somehow she must endure.

Some relief from serious tensions is necessary and can be found in the outpouring of woes—but not profitably unless the confidante she chooses is able to help her see things objectively and has faith that the graces of the vocation will not be found wanting. A confessor or an older woman wise in the ups and downs of marriage can do much to help, whereas a next-door neighbor quick to sympathize and agree that she does, indeed, have a hard row to hoe can do terrible damage.

The woman who has been given the grace of a greater hunger after holiness can use her spiritual growth creatively. She can

cover her husband's weakness rather than expose it, delineating his virtues for their children, shielding his faults from family and friends. She can build on what is good and sound, and add, out of her growing love for Christ, new love for him—shored up by prayers for the grace to love when loving grows difficult. Secure in the knowledge that God sends grace in abundance to each according to his need and that, after she has done all she knows how, the cure for their ills is in His hands, she can gradually learn to relax and let God in His own time work all things to good.

It may take the whole of her life, but long before it is over she will understand that the times of unbearable pain have been the most fruitful. The burning away of self in pain, the emptying of her own will, purifies her love of self-interest and she can begin to see the enormity of Christ's love for her own soul and the soul of her husband. No longer is her marriage like a chance mismatching, nor the frictions the result of ill-chosen partners drawn together and imprisoned in a union that has far too little *better* in it, and far worse than *worse*. And looking back over the trials which have been the hardest to bear, she will discover that they seemed to be especially designed for her. To a woman who cherishes solvency, the yoke of debts and mismanagement of family money is a cross of almost unendurable weight. To the woman who delights in respect of persons, the public displays of a drinking husband before the eyes of family and friends are almost impossible to bear. To the woman who likes to reason, analyze, "talk things out," marriage to a man who deliberately blinds himself to reason and defies all rules of fairness to assert his authority is a torment.

facing up to one's own faults

It is when she begins to understand that part of her suffering has been the result of her own pride, that she can begin to recognize other areas of imbalance where her own distortions have been to blame. For instance, the woman who makes a fetish of house-keeping, who goes overboard in the pursuit of *order*, may find that in her passion for everything in its right place and the creation of a "tranquil atmosphere" in her home, she has been lacking in warmth and companionship. On the other hand the woman who is too offhand about trying to keep things in order, who airily ignores the call to conventional housewifeliness for the pursuit of intellectual improvement, may find that the clue to her husband's chronic irritability lies in the eternal stack of unwashed dishes.

Even the woman who, on fire with charity, sees Christ in her neighbor and rushes to tend her neighbor's every need, step into the breach, care for the children, take her neighbor's children in

—may find that in her enthusiasm to serve Christ in all men she has come perilously close to spreading herself too thin, taking on more than she can handle, and in a very real way displeasing—perhaps even disobeying—the wishes of her husband and letting the needs of her own children go begging. (This may sound like treason but it is a common form of apostolic greediness among women of good will not only to want to serve all men, but to *try* to—and leave nothing for the *other* Christs to do.)

In marriages where spiritual discord exists, these errors committed in the best faith can well aggravate the situation. The spiritual growth of a wife must help her eventually to accept her share of the guilt, bend every energy to correct it, and if there are still differences to understand that if she loves as she should they should *make* no difference. For lack of demonstrations of affection, she must abide quietly in the conviction that she is loved, even if it does not show too often. (This is not self-delusion—with rare exceptions, if there was love once, it is still there. Sometimes it takes near-tragedy to bring it to light, but it is there.) For lack of understanding, she must contribute understanding. For lack of increased spiritual activity, she must keep hands off and pray for an increase of spiritual activity.

There are still other marriages, with trials which seem to be permitted not so much as instruments of filling in the valleys and levelling the mountains of faults, but as mysterious invitations to plumb the frustration of Christ's love as He suffered alone in the Garden, and draw closer to Him in a union of pain. There are women who want many children and are married to men who don't—and won't. There are women who are radiantly pure and faithful, married to men who aren't. And there is that common and tragic suffering of women who are married to alcoholics. It's no use blinking such situations as these when writing of Christian marriage, dismissing them loftily with a few obvious phrases about the imprudent choice of mates, the lack of mature preparation or ignorance of Christian duty and the marriage ideal. These things exist—yet they are still not impediments to sanctity. Where they exist—they are the means to it. And where they exist and there are women who must admit they exist, articles describing how things "should be" are no help at all. No one knows better than such wives how things should be. They want to know what to do with things the way they are.

This article would be unbearably presumptuous if it pretended to be the answer. Nor does it pretend that no one has tried yet to give any answers. Call it an appeal in behalf of the greater

number of the married (in particular the wives—let someone else write about the husbands) whose marriages are far from living up to the patterns so far exhibited. What they want to be told, in a better way than this writer can tell them, is that whether their trials are small, medium or large, they are the stuff of which sanctity is made. Their vocation by its very commonness hides heroism more successfully than any other vocation. It has none of the romantic allure of the vocation of the contemplative religious. It has none of the derring-do of the missionary vocation in foreign lands. Because it is the vocation of the multitude, far too few remember to tell them it is the one vocation that peoples the world. Nuns and priests, bishops and popes are born of marriages, and statesmen and geniuses and prophets—and saints. Out of all kinds of marriages—not just the happy ones—come the people whom Christ has bade carry on the work of the redemption.

And the women and men who must face the fact that terrible differences divide them in their marriages must also know that the path of the differences itself can be productive. Pain is fruitful, and purifies—the whole scheme of the redemption revolves around One Man's pain. And where there is one who is good and longs to be holy, married to one who is not and does not, then thank God that in marriage they *are* one, because by the love and prayer and sacrifice and pain of the whole member the afflicted member may be saved.

Once there was a girl who prayed and prayed for the grace to choose the right husband, but still she was not sure. And she went for the umpteenth time to her confessor and said: "I've prayed and prayed, and still I'm not sure. I want so badly to do God's will—to be a saint, but supposing my choice is a mistake?" And he said the funniest thing. He said: "Suppose it is—what of it?"

OUR WILL

When it comes to doing penance
We like to choose our own.
In accepting what God sends us,
We grumble, grunt and groan.



Journey to Bethlehem

All of life is a journey to Bethlehem.

All of his life the Christian is called to prepare for the birth of Christ in his soul. Having Him already by grace, possessing Him and being possessed by Him, still for the Christian there can be no surcease of effort until Christ becomes completely his and he becomes completely Christ's, as Mary was at Bethlehem.

All of life is a preparation to see Christ in the flesh, as Mary saw Him in the flesh. Only heaven will be our Bethlehem where we shall see the Word in His glorified flesh; whereas Mary beheld Him first at Bethlehem and His body was a baby's.

Life for us is a journey to see God. All of us share the vicissitudes of a journey; all of us must know on it suffering and trial. All of us have been given the means to get there—our intellects and wills and emotions and bodies, families and friends and even enemies (who are more helpful than we think!), all the things of God's world that He has made both of nature and of grace. All to be treasured and used as God desires; all to be thanked for; all to be rejoiced in.

Life for all Christians is a journey to Bethlehem. And all on the journey travel together; for we are His Church, His Church visible yet concealed: to be revealed on the last day as His Body as indeed Christ Himself—as Mary travelled to Bethlehem with Christ concealed: to be revealed at the end of the journey on the appointed day of His birth.

So we travel together as His Church. And all the Church's goods are ours—sacrifice and sacraments, fullness of doctrine and breadth of holiness. All this we share, and so indeed we journey together. But in another sense it is also true that we journey alone: each person following a slightly different path upon which the Spirit leads him; each journeying to God according to a particular way He wills to glorify Himself. On the journey there is the thrill of companionship, the knowledge of mutual aid and love as we seek for Him together. But there is also the aloneness, the necessary loneliness the Christian must endure, the knowledge that "I must make this journey myself and no other can take it for me"; the gradual realization that God Who desires its completion wills that along the way we should never find *perfect* companionship, never be completely nor permanently satisfied in human beings, lest we forget the goal of our journey. That is why the journey must be lonely, blessedly lonely.

by Dorothy Dohen

Each of us is a unique traveller, uniquely blessed, uniquely loved and lovely. Yet God has appointed as paths to Him vocations that give broad outlines of the journey, a guide and a suggestion of the route.

religious and lay life

Thus we say religious life is a way to Him, and so is lay life. While we acknowledge religious life to be the shortest, most direct way (depending of course on the fidelity of the one following it) we rejoice that we too are journeying to Him whom He wills to pursue lay vocations.

And we who travel as lay people He wills to use the gifts He has provided for us—material possessions, sex, and our free will—all of which the religious offers to do without on the journey as through vows of poverty, chastity and obedience he gives up what he sees as hindrances. He won't make good time if he has to be bothered with them. But for the lay person it is different. He is called rather to the spirit of the counsels than to their actual fulfillment. He is not called to relinquish the goods of this world but to use them aright; not to give up sex but to use it in marriage as a sacrifice—"making it holy" in the sight of God; not to surrender his will to a superior (though as we shall discuss later on, the element of obedience must enter into every life) but to use his freedom well: that through taking responsibility and initiative in temporal affairs they may be more readily restored to Christ.

"Not to give up but to use aright." Many times this phrase has been given as the keynote in forming a spirituality for lay people. And one does not gainsay its truth. We do not become holy by refusing to be what God wills us to be; we cannot flee our responsibility nor relinquish our stewardship. What is the more perfect way to holiness for a religious is not necessarily the way for us. A true spirituality is never merely imitative but creative. An authentic lay spirituality will never be formed by slavish imitation of religious life, but rather by the mighty surge of the Creator Spirit impelling us to love. But neither will a genuine spirituality for lay people be reached by hit and miss rejection of the traditional aids to holiness. "Not to give up but to use aright," which can be interpreted as a true distinction between lay and religious life, can also be said too glibly, too thoughtlessly. One can easily overlook the fact that to a great extent one can "use aright" *only* if one has first "given up."

This of course needs clarification.

why penance

In the beginning after God had created the world "He looked on it and saw that it was good." And contemporary Christians having for the most part thrown over the last traces of Jansenism look at sex and recognize that it is good. We reflect on our free will and know it to be good. We look at the things of earth, houses and land, and food and wine, and we know that fundamentally they are good.

We behold internal and external goods, material goods, natural goods. And all we have to do is to use them aright!

And here of course lies the difficulty. When we try to use them aright we are caught up short. At every step there is conflict. We see ourselves using our free will to choose evil. For the things of earth which we have acknowledged as good we lack reverence, nor do we see that they are good because they are God's; for to us they have become merely objects of pleasure and self-gratification.

What is the trouble? Why is this so? The answer can be found in the fact that our nature is good but we are not naturally good. Neither are we Adams and Eves in Paradise going around with natures completely in harmony with grace, with intellects, emotions and wills completely sound. We have disordered natures; we lack integrity—which is another way of saying that we suffer the effects of original sin, that we are disjointed. We lack unity within ourselves. We are out of step with ourselves (indeed with our highest desire to be conformed to Christ). Above all we are out of step with God.

And that is why we have to re-discover penance.

the prosaic virtue

Penance has sometimes been dismissed as a "religious" virtue—one for the cloister and not for the world. That is because we think of penance only as a series of external exercises (many of which undoubtedly are not in keeping with lay life; the member of a family, for instance, who decides to follow a Trappist diet will make life well-nigh unbearable for the cook) rather than—as it primarily is—a habit of soul.

Penance is maligned too as a negative virtue. People see it as something confining and drab, with its emphasis on sin and repentance, and its awareness of human propensity to run after evil. Yet penance includes much more; in the first place it presupposes charity. For why do we turn away from sin if it is not that we are drawn by the love of God? Why do we sorrow except that we have offended Him the supremely Lovable? Why do we

desire to give up our attachment to the things of this world if it is not that we wish to attain perfect charity?

The aim of penance is never to make of the soul an empty house, but to make it a place where Christ can be born.

For everyone the journey to Bethlehem must be made in the spirit of penance, the spirit of sorrow for sin, of longing for a Savior Who will make that which is crooked in us straight, Who will re-order our lives to His glory. For the efforts we make to exercise the virtue of penance are in a way the least part of the story. It is for us to manifest our willingness to repent of our sins, to empty our lives of all that is not God; but the work itself is God's. It can only be accomplished by His grace. That is why the Christian differs from the pagan ascetic who sought to discipline his faculties and to reach a certain natural perfection. The latter tried to make something of himself; frequently his austerities were manifestations of pride. True penance on the other hand is rooted in humility. It is based on acknowledgment of our nothingness. The truly penitential person is not complacent because he has attained mastery of himself; rather he is eager that *God* should have perfect mastery of him.

Our distaste for penance is probably partly due to the fact that we do not find it a glamorous virtue. There is nothing particularly soul-satisfying in it. We do not deny that it is a solid virtue and a fundamental one. But who wants to be bothered with the foundation when he can discuss the turrets of the interior castle?

So subconsciously we reason and prefer to aspire to heroic abandonment to providence or a certain spectacular poverty rather than to fight really against the sin within ourselves. And yet this neglect of the foundations of the spiritual life is responsible for as many disasters today as it was when Cajetan wrote: "Let spiritual directors take special note of this and let them make sure that their disciples are proficient in the active life before suggesting to them the summits of contemplation. One must conquer one's passions by habits of gentleness, of patience . . . of liberality, humility, etc., before it is possible, passions now subdued, to rise up to the contemplative life. For lack of this preliminary mortification, many, who instead of walking have bounded along the way of God, have found themselves, after a long period devoted to striving after contemplation, destitute of all virtues, impatient, passionate and proud at the least provocation. Such persons have not achieved the active life, nor the contemplative life, nor yet the mixed life; they have built upon the sand. And would to God that this defect were rare!"

the obedience of Mary and Joseph

But where is our example in the practice of penance? If as lay people we cannot practice it in the same way as religious, where are we to find our example? We can find it very simply in that journey to Bethlehem made by Mary and Joseph. At first sight this may seem difficult. In the gospel account the story of the trip from Nazareth is briefly told; not much detail is given. And yet much is implied; there is much we can ponder on without unduly embroidering the gospel narrative.

First of all we note that Mary and Joseph undertook the journey out of obedience. "In those days there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled." And Mary and Joseph complied and left Nazareth to go to Bethlehem. Theirs was an immediate obedience to the will of God. God's will? Why, this was a decree of an emperor! Yes, but these two people who were obedient to the will of God when it was manifested in an extraordinary way by an angel were equally obedient when it was made known to them in an ordinary way by men. Children obeying parents, wives being subject to their husbands, Christians obeying the laws of the Church, citizens obeying legitimate civil authority (Christian anarchists to the contrary!) are submitting their wills to God's. The exercise of penance, of turning away from sin and embracing the good, is accomplished in the first place by obeying His commandments, and also the directives of those to whom He has made us subject. "Obedience is better than sacrifice" is an ancient adage. The woman who moons about, saying how little she desires to do her own will and how much she desires God's will, can test her penitential spirit by her alacrity in finding God's will in the wishes of her husband.

common discomfort

Mary and Joseph took to the road and suffered the discomforts of the journey. There is nothing in the gospel story to make us think that the journey for them was any more difficult than it was for the other people making it—save that Mary's Baby was almost due. But then, there were probably other pregnant women on the road to Bethlehem. The fact that Mary and Joseph were willing to share in the common discomfort is another lesson for us in the practice of penance. The opportunities for practicing it usually lie right around us. The material at hand we share with everyone else. Ten days of ninety-degree heat, the drenching rain that falls down without warning, the subway train stopped dead for two hours (with the fans not working), the snowstorm that pulls down the power lines—all these we share with other people,

sometimes millions of other people. Their commonplaceness does not make them valueless in God's sight, even though it causes us to spurn them.

Above all, we may overlook the fact that our daily work is meant to be the first of our penitential exercises. The spirituality of any Christian is suspect if he seeks escape from the common task of earning his bread.

How often do we find ourselves complaining of the trials of work, weather, the discomforts of the common cold—all of which can be so many means of purifying us as we advance on the way to God. Mary and Joseph did not refuse to share the common lot—in fact, they were probably indistinguishable in the crowd on the road to Bethlehem. We stress this point especially because it is so easy to make the practice of penance a way of satisfying our flair for the unusual and dramatic, to take on mortifications which cater to our complacency and confirm us in that self-love from which theoretically they are supposed to free us. It seems a safe rule to make that we should not take on unusual penances until we have first submitted ourselves to the common ones. Don't choose total abstinence from meat until you have first learned to eat leftovers!

n keeping with our state

Of course, there was something unusual that happened at the completion of the journey to Bethlehem. Mary and Joseph took shelter in a stable, and while with the housing shortage unusual places of abode have become common, still a stable is an extraordinary place for the birth of a child. But let's note one thing from the gospel account which is of utmost importance in the practice of penance in lay life. We read that the Holy Family went to the stable because "there was no room for them in the inn." Joseph evidently had tried the inn; in our mind's eye we can see him knocking on all the doors in Bethlehem looking for shelter for Mary and the soon-to-be-born Jesus. Would he have gone to all that trouble for himself? We do not know, but we do know one thing: Joseph was the head of a family and he had to consider his responsibility to provide for the needs of the family. A father, no matter how he may be drawn to the practice of penance himself, must consider the needs of his wife and children. A home is not a monastery, and whenever the regimen of the monastery is imposed on it disaster always seems to result. The hermit in the desert can choose his penances as he likes, but the lay person must consider his responsibilities to those around him. Ugly

rooms, for instance, may be a good mortification for the beauty-loving housewife, but she has the obligation to make the house a cheerful place for her children. Penance is not to interfere with the duties of one's state in life.

accepting what God sends

But Joseph had done his duty and still there was no room. What then? He accepted what God provided—a stable. And we can surmise that he and Mary accepted it with joy, in perfect conformity with God's will.

And in this they are our model. The efforts we make to purify our souls to prepare for God's entrance into them are not as efficacious as the work He Himself will do to clean them and make them ready for His coming. Trials, suffering, illness, bereavement, heartbreak—all these are indispensable, divine means of "preparing the way of the Lord." He knows better than we do ourselves what it is that blocks His way, what obstacle is in our souls that prevents Him from filling them completely. To the person who is busy about many things—even many good things—He sends illness to remind him of "the one thing necessary." To the person who has a natural facility for getting along with people and attracting them to Christ, He sends the cross of misunderstanding, of failure.

But whatever hardship He allows, whatever suffering is His will, it must be received willingly and with confidence in His goodness. He willed His Son to be born in a stable—an unlikely place indeed. In the midst of trials and darkness that we cannot fathom we may not realize it, but then may be the likeliest time for Christ to be born most perfectly in our souls. By devious ways God will prepare us for His coming, but He works unerringly. We have to trust Him.

Our penance will have achieved its purpose if it has prepared us to submit to the purifications God Himself will perform in our souls.

our whole life long

Mary and Joseph were ready to accept God's will completely with whatever suffering, whatever difficulty it entailed. But the events of the conception and the birth of Christ were not isolated phenomena in their lives. Their whole lives, as it were, led up to the journey to Bethlehem. Everything had prepared them to embrace the will of God.

This preparation must not be ignored in our own lives. We mention that in lay life most of our penances will be found either in doing our duties or in accepting the suffering God sends; but

one point may easily be overlooked. It is true that the mother will perform her penance by getting up in the night to feed her infant or to nurse a sick child, and the father will do his by foregoing some desired recreation to buy shoes for the children; but usually these are not isolated acts in the lives of either the mother or the father. There were other things which prepared for them. Unless the mother had already acquired a certain amount of self-discipline she would rebel and decide with many other women that one squalling infant is enough; "let's have no more of them." If the father hadn't in a measure already become detached from money and the things it can provide, he could not sacrifice for his family. The point is: *we need penance even to prepare us to do our duty.*

Especially is this true when performing our duty becomes difficult due to trying circumstances. For instance, when in the Pope's address to midwives he counsels the practice of continence in difficult cases where another conception would mean the death of the wife, he says that continence is not impossible. He sees it as a duty, admittedly a difficult one which calls for heroism. But (without making allowances for the immeasurable power of grace) would it not be practically impossible unless the husband and wife were already schooled in self-denial?

Voluntary mortification cannot be ignored entirely. If we say we'll do only our duty, after awhile we won't be able to do even our duty. The Church recognizes this and in her wisdom commands self-denial by her laws of fast and abstinence.

One of the great problems many people face when they decide to live a mortified life to advance in the love of God is that their previous life has not prepared them for it. It is difficult in later life to acquire self-discipline if one has always been undisciplined from early childhood. It will take gobs of grace and heroic effort for the victim of momism to shake off his selfishness and irresponsibility. This is not to say that it cannot be done—for nothing is impossible with God—but it is extremely difficult.

That is why children are given a headstart in becoming holy if they are brought up in a home where there is order and stability and discipline and love. Natural virtues are pallid things in the light of the supernatural virtues, but the latter have a bad time functioning without the former. The child who is trained to be considerate of his parents, to share the last available cup-cake with his brother, to eat what is served even if he doesn't especially like it, and to get the leaves raked because that's his responsibility, won't necessarily become a saint, but he is good material on which grace

can work. If there is a minimum of material goods necessary for the practice of virtue, there is certainly a minimum of emotional and psychological goods that children need for their normal development. Included in these would be the security of the well-ordered, consistent, dependable love of their parents for them and for each other. Self-control and discipline—both on the natural and supernatural level—presuppose the motivation of love.

and the shepherds came

But we seem to have wandered far afield from the journey to Bethlehem. But we can argue that we really haven't in going back to the home; for the first journey began from the home at Nazareth.

One final thing we can learn about penance from the example of Mary and Joseph at the birth of Christ, and that is in their reception of the shepherds. We can imagine them greeting them with such love and friendliness and joy, delighted at being able to show Christ forth to them. The shepherds were simple people, probably not particularly holy, but Mary and Joseph did not frighten them with their own holiness.

Neither should our efforts to become holy separate us from other people. Penance is meant to be a bridge not a barrier. Being hard on ourselves should make us easier on others. There is something wrong with a spirit of penance which makes us count the lumps of sugar other people put into their coffee, or take scandal every time they light a cigarette.

Penance is supposed to free us to love, to love both God and people aright. And while it prepares us for the birth of God in our souls, it prepares us to love our neighbors more fully, with greater tact and joy.



CLERICAL HELP

Perhaps at your director
You sometimes get quite miffed.
Yet when you get to heaven
You'll thank him for the lift.

The Spiritual Life and Emotional Disorders

CAN neurotics become saints? Weren't many of the saints neurotic? If a person frequents the sacraments enough won't his neurosis disappear? Dom Gregory Stevens, who studied at Sant' Anselmo and the Angelicum in Rome, and writes frequently on moral aspects and problems of modern psychology, gives some answers.

Dom Gregory Stevens, S.T.D.: The life that Christ came to give and to give "more abundantly" surpasses all the capabilities and desires of our human nature. It is a life the Christian is to lead in familiarity with Christ, and it is based upon grace—a real participation or sharing in the very innermost life of the Blessed Trinity.

Far above and beyond nature as grace certainly is, yet it is a gift which presupposes nature, and which works in harmony with our natural abilities. Thus, supernatural faith, while allowing us to know God as He knows Himself, yet is exercised by our human intellect and in the way natural to our intellect. So too, supernatural charity, the love of God and neighbor, is indeed a love beyond our natural ability to evoke but it is a love whose act is just as much a product of our human will as is our quite natural love for our friends or our country. In fact, the whole marvellous life of grace is not lived, is not exercised in opposition to, or independently of what is truly God-given in our nature, but only in opposition to sin and its unfortunate consequences in our nature.

Grace itself is intrinsically efficacious, which is to say that it produces its own proper effects without human aid, by the sole power of God. While there is no real, positive preparation for grace, and while human means can never produce supernatural results of themselves, grace does demand *the fullest co-operation* of all human abilities and powers. This co-operation includes the negative function of removing obstacles to the working of grace, and the positive task of directing our activity in accord with grace. In its essential operation grace is independent of the work of the recipient's faculties. Sanctifying grace itself ennobles our very substance and gives us a new nature and a new life. On the other hand we must remember that in its expression grace radiates out

upon our human action, and that this expression can be in some measure frustrated by the weakness or disorder of our human faculties.

the rule of love

A conscious awareness of this last point is of particular importance for those—lay or religious—who are desirous of devoting themselves to the pursuit of Christian perfection. It is clear from the New Testament as well as from theologians such as St. Thomas that the essence of perfection is charity toward God and neighbor. The "spiritual life," not different from the Christian life in its fullness, is no more nor less than the seeking of the perfection of charity. This charity, uniting man to God, will direct through the operation of the virtue of prudence all man's activities, his whole heart, strength and soul. It will bring to perfection the whole person in his intellectual, social and moral activities. To be perfect, charity must be an *integrative* force, guiding, purifying and uplifting the *whole man* toward the goodness of God.

If the life of charity, and thus the "spiritual life," is so comprehensive, it will be necessary for man, engaging himself on this path, to possess or to acquire in his own personality the highest possible degree of "instrumentality." All one's natural resources and powers will be developed and integrated under the rule of love, and the more perfectly these function the more completely will love operate. We have no right to believe or to expect that the omnipotence of God will free us of striving to perfect our own nature so as to be a more perfect instrument for the expression of grace.

This life-long task of self-perfection in co-operation with grace must touch all aspects of our personality. It will deal primarily with those faculties of intellect and will by which man acts as man and through which precisely grace operates, but it will include our emotional and even our physical life. In this connection we may note that St. Thomas places the "seat" of the infused virtues of temperance and fortitude in the concupiscible and irascible appetites respectively: that is, in the emotional order, subjected to the rule of reason. That we must consider man's lower-self in the work of perfection is clear to one who realizes the true unity of human nature, and the close interdependence and inter-relationship of all human powers.

Anyone acquainted with Christian asceticism will realize the need of a control of the body. Those who give thought to the question will see, too, a necessity for a real training of the intellect to guide and deepen the life of charity. This does not indicate the

need for those wishing to lead the life of Christian perfection to become scholars. But an ability to judge truly of reality, to reflect upon truth, to see the real significance of things is required for the intelligent, human direction of the life of union with God.

emotional life

Perhaps, however, our spiritual writers have given insufficient attention to man's *emotional* and *affective life* in relation to the perfection of charity. In these days of emotional instability, stemming from our chaotic social life and weakened families, it is becoming more and more evident that the whole range of human emotional life must and actually does play as important a part in the "spiritual life" as in the ordinary natural life of man. It is in the sphere of the affective life that there arise the many forms of psychic disturbances on which modern psychology casts considerable light. Can these disturbances be without their effect on man's religious and spiritual life? Can we hope to build a solid spiritual edifice on the shifting sands of emotional disorder?

Let us consider, briefly, how the disordered condition of human emotions, by interfering with normal human life, can disturb the development of the spiritual life. God's grace demands our full co-operation. Such working with grace will be more complete when there are no obstacles to normal human activity. Certainly grace will give man an assistance that cannot be doubted, but this help will be directed, first of all, to increasing the aptness and suitability of the human faculties which are the instruments for the expression of the operation of grace. Our own rational co-operation will likewise be directed toward achieving a more integrated personality, and a more harmonious function of all our powers.

Christ's parable of the "talents" given by the master to the servant applies to the natural as well as to the supernatural order, and we should be remiss in our striving for perfection did we fail to seek a more ready and apt instrumentality in the service of God.

It is, of course, impossible to give here any detailed account of this vast and important question. Let it suffice if we consider the central point of Christian perfection and the most fundamental of our human emotions—love.

Our supernatural love of God is an act of our human will by which we adhere to the Highest Good out of devotion for that Good; even more, it is the warm human affection for Christ our Lord, for His Father and for Their Holy Spirit. Can we doubt of the intimacy to which charity calls us when we read St. John's account of the discourses of Our Lord at the Last Supper? Surely

St. Thomas, summing up the whole of Christian tradition, was correct in stating that our supernatural charity is a true friendship, a real intimacy, a personal union with God in the Three Divine Persons. While this love is essentially an act of the will, and while its basis is a union of our will with the divine will, yet it is we ourselves, in our whole being, with our entire personality, who are to love God. This personal love for God is not a servile thing; it is not anxious, for "love casteth out fear." It is not merely a desire for the benefits God can bestow, but it is modelled on the love of the Man Christ for His Heavenly Father—a strong, noble and ennobling love of persons, filled indeed with awe, but just as warm, just as "affectionate," just as mature as must be any true friendship.

The second aspect of this divine charity is a love of neighbor—a love which is to have all the characteristics so aptly given by St. Paul in the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians: "Charity is patient, is kind; . . . feels no envy . . . is never perverse or proud, never insolent; . . . has no selfish aims; cannot be provoked, does not brood over an injury." Without this love no one can hope to attain the goal of sanctity, for "the mark by which all men will know you for My disciples will be the love you bear one another."

Again this love is a true response to the good of the other person, not a mere matter of sentiment, but on the other hand not a merely cold, intellectual appraisal of the dignity of another creature. Rather it is a warm, human love—the model of which again is Christ, the Son of Man, in His dealings with His fellow men.

It has been emphasized that both in regard to God and to others the love of charity is a matter primarily of the will, but it concerns the whole person. It is a love which will have—and should have—an emotional overflow. For we love God and others as human beings, in a *human* way—elevated indeed by grace and charity, but none the less human for that.

It must be recognized too, that our human affective love is the key and center of all our emotional life, and that we must learn to love properly. In man there are two levels of love: the rational and the sensitive—the love of the will and that of the emotional order. The emotional form of love, sense love, lies at the basis not only of our joy and our desires, but also of our aversions, our dislikes and our hatreds. This love develops during our earliest years before the intellect and will are functioning, as the basic emotional force in the child, and it continues to exert an influence on

the functions of our mind and to qualify the activity of our will throughout life.

Love diverted into self-gratification

St. Thomas sees pleasure or delectation as the proper object of emotional love. Nature has associated pleasure with the satisfaction of our elementary physical and emotional needs, and sense love is evoked by what is good or pleasurable in relation to these needs. This love, then, in its response to objects is connected with natural needs and basic functions. Yet it is possible to have this love diverted, at least in part, from need and function, and sought only for the pleasure and gratification involved. Love then will reach out for objects, or persons, or actions which are pleasurable without really being necessary or truly useful. Thus dissociated from the normal, love will remain a matter of pure enjoyment.

As the baptized child grows and comes with the age of reason into the use of his intellect and will, the supernatural endowments of faith, hope and charity are activated in the full sense for the first time. Yet the spiritual faculties of reason and will, elevated by the supernatural virtues, do not come upon "virgin soil." The child has already acquired habits of behavior on an emotional basis, and these do not automatically disappear, nor are they in any way fully subject to the control of these higher faculties.

The child whose love has become merely a matter of self-gratification will continue to manifest this love even as an adult. This will mean that the seeking of pleasure will be a basic need or drive in personality. The rational love of the will, which is normally directed to what is good in itself—to what is rationally judged as good—will be in varying degrees frustrated, and with the acts of supernatural charity will also be hindered.

One could expect to find under these circumstances a constant seeking of what is gratifying, and this on the sensitive and even physical levels. There will be a search for protection, for greater security in order to escape the unpleasant altogether. In relations with others such a person will seek, perhaps habitually and unconsciously, pleasure and gratification, and will thus not establish real love and friendship. He will flee unpleasant tasks and experiences. In the intellectual order, even, serious discipline of the mind and true formation will not be sought as much as pleasant, more immediately satisfying work. In the moral sphere those activities will be preferable which are the more pleasant, even if unreasonable and thus immoral.

We are able to recognize also that such a love may well form the basis for hatred. The constant seeking of gratification from

others, the need of protection, and the petulancy of such affection can lead to hatred, aversion, and the manifesting of aggressive tendencies. Hatred, according to St. Thomas, is an emotion of the concupiscible appetite, the opposite of love, in that instead of reaching out for good it withdraws from "evil." The emotions of fear and anger-aggressive tendencies, spring from the irascible appetite as strong responses to protect the individual's basic needs in case of emergency.

If then, emotional love is centered upon enjoyment, pleasure for its own sake becomes a basic need. When the satisfaction of this need is thwarted the emotional response is one of hatred, or even, if the threat appears more serious, of anger or some violent aggressive tendency. This feeling of aggression or the feeling of hatred may be directed to the same person to whom the love was directed. So strong may such feelings become that all real affective bonds with others are frustrated. Furthermore, this lack of ability to love results, quite naturally, in a general anxiety, doubting uncertainty and a feeling of inadequacy.

Scruples are a common form of this disorder, found in persons with a religious background. The rigid, meticulous and strong perfectionistic character of these sufferers renders life painful, decisions well-nigh impossible, and any development of love is soon thwarted. One may develop strong feelings of guilt and unworthiness, not connected with serious breaches of the moral law, but with trivialities. It may even happen that disbelief, despair and doubts regarding God and His love may arise.

obstacles to charity

It is easy to see how such disorders in one's affective and emotional life can block the development even of natural, rational love. By thus diminishing the capacity to love, obstacles are all put in the way of the growth of supernatural charity, the acts of which are elicited by the will. Even if acts of love are possible, charity will not dominate and direct continually the activities of an individual suffering these disorders, until the obstacles are removed and the affective life is raised to share in the life of true charity.

It is important to note also that the emotional disorders we have mentioned can distort one's ideas about the fundamental principles of the moral life itself. The moral life is the pursuit of man's final goal, union with God in heaven, by the rational choice of good objects and actions. If one sees the "good" only in terms of the "pleasant," the whole moral life may be reduced to little more than a seeking of God's benefits for the satisfaction

of the individual. The basic notion of seeking for what is truly good will be lost or obscured. Furthermore, God will be loved principally as a source of security and gratification, and when God does not respond to the demands made of Him, aversion and even an anger against God may develop. In this case God will be seen as a stern, harsh father, and His law as merely restrictive of the individual's pursuit of happiness. Such attitudes are at variance with the true conception of the moral life itself, and will render difficult any real moral development and growth.

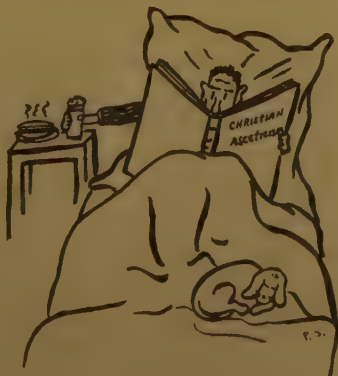
Human means to a cure

In these and similar illnesses we deal with disturbances presenting obstacles to that development of true love and integration of personality which sanctity demands. Mental health and the mastery of one's emotional and instinctive life implied thereby are necessary in order for the soul to be free to develop properly its life of supernatural perfection. While not diminishing the power of God or in any way lessening the intrinsic efficacy of grace or the value of the sacraments, devotion, and piety, we are not allowed as rational creatures to turn away from the assistance offered in such cases by modern medicine and science.

No one has the right to expect from God a cure of these disorders, any more than of physical illnesses, unless the normal, human means of help have been resorted to. The illnesses we have mentioned are not directly illnesses of the soul in its higher faculties; they are emotional disturbances which do affect adversely the proper operation of the higher faculties. They have their own remedies, and religious exercises in themselves are not to be seen as providing such remedies in the normal course of providence. A true psychotherapy will enable the individual to grow in moral responsibility and to develop the capacity for a genuine love for

THE EASY WAY

I love to read theology
While lying in my bed.
I take ascetics gladly
With a pillow 'neath my head.



others and for God. Too often, those interested in the spiritual life fail to recognize that these disorders are emotional in nature and that the spiritual and religious life suffers in proportion.

It is very difficult to set any exact limits between normal and abnormal, between a disturbance serious enough to be a real illness and a trait or tendency of personality not yet so grave. Everyone has some characteristics, some traits of character which are immature, and in some way "neurotic"—the absolutely normal individual is merely an abstract ideal or rule. Such tendencies more or less strongly developed are proportionately greater or less obstacles to perfection and integration.

It is quite possible to see even in the saints, especially in the earlier years, some forms of behavior and some minor traits that are not to be emulated. In this whole matter of emotional disorders there is question of degree or of a greater and less. Yet it may reasonably be stated that *the more well-ordered, balanced and mature is the emotional life, the greater are the possibilities for spiritual advancement.* A study of the lives of many saints will show gradual growth in the affective sphere, and in natural personality as well as in grace and supernatural perfection.

the saints grew in grace and normality

While their lives illustrate a growth above all in the sphere of the supernatural virtues, this is accompanied, often in a remarkable way, by the development of the whole person, and the gradual disappearance of what might be called "neurotic" traits of character. St. Benedict Joseph Labré in his youth at home was much inclined to a very rigid, meticulous perfectionism. In fact, his withdrawal from several different religious communities may well have been due to his inflexible, unadaptable personal code. As he advanced in years and in sanctity one notes a wonderful "mellowing," a great growth in real, affective charity which made him the great friend of the poor and the distressed. The young saint was surely not mentally ill so that he suffered from a real neurosis, understood today, yet his behavior did manifest rather abnormal features which the growth of true charity gradually eliminated. St. Benedict Joseph was truly a saint but he was not born such; sanctity was the end of a long and hard path, and the result of gradual development which brought charm and balance to the whole personality.

In the life of St. Paul the over-zealous youth was transformed into the loving Apostle who was "all things to all men." The Little Flower from a very shy, almost anti-social girl became the young woman aflame with love for the whole world.

These and so many other examples of the simultaneous growth of charity and normal human personality point to the need for removing or lessening those aspects of character which would hinder the growth of the life of grace. In some saints there were undoubtedly real miracles of grace transforming the whole person, but even in these instances rational co-operation with grace is needed; there is no question of just sitting back and trusting that grace alone will do all. In their spiritual "maturity" the saints manifest no real abnormality. In all the saints great effort was required to co-operate fully with grace. For us who try to follow their steps this same effort is demanded and is to be put forth with the help of all the human resources and knowledge at hand. Sanctity and sanity grow hand in hand.

Space has allowed but the briefest of indications of a vast field of interest and importance to anyone seriously interested in the spiritual life. One point is to be stressed: the supernatural love of charity is the keystone of the spiritual edifice; it is the virtue leading us directly to God, motivating and directing the prudent exercise of all the virtues and faculties and integrating the human personality around a divine goal. This whole process of perfection is carried on by man's natural powers, aided by grace, and it depends for its expression and exercise on the capacity of these powers. It has been noted primarily that emotional disorders hindering the normal growth of man's ability to love properly and usually place obstacles to the expression of the virtue of charity. Without limiting God's power, we may yet say that without the removal of these obstacles sanctity is not possible. In the *normal course* of providence man himself, guided by his intelligence, is to remove these difficulties.

Living as we do in an age which tends to produce emotional instability, our thoughts about the spiritual life must include serious consideration of the emotions and the problems they raise. Our Christian ideal is certainly not to suppress but to elevate the affective sphere to a real sharing in the life of grace. St. Bernard of Clairvaux is a fine example of how a strong sensitivity and finely developed affections can lend strength, charm and completeness to the life of sanctity. The wonderfully sensitive human heart of Christ indicates the true goal at which we are to aim.

Grace a cure for emotional disorders?

Grace, as such, is not a real remedy for real emotional disorders any more than it is a cure for cancer. The Catholic cancer patient has no more right to expect from grace alone a full cure than has the mentally ill Catholic. Grace will enable one to bear

the sufferings of cancer, and will certainly aid the mentally disturbed. Indeed, God's grace can work cures without human intervention, but we all know that this is not the normal course of events under providence. What is often not recognized is that psychic disorders are emotional in nature and origin, and are not, as such, disorders of the spiritual soul. The diseases of the soul are *sin* in the will and *ignorance* in the intellect. Grace does have a goal in its workings in man the re-integration of human nature disturbed and disorganized by original sin and its consequences. But in considering real emotional disorders, we are not to look to grace or the exercises of the spiritual life as remedies. If in the workings of providence modern psychology offers real assistance in the solution of emotional disorder, the Catholic has no justification to shut his mind to this new information on the plea that grace will take care of everything. All our natural resources—within us and external to us—are to be used as means of co-operating with the grace of God.

It is not uncommon in our day to see religious life itself disturbed by emotional factors. Some ascetical practices can be taken up from motives far from those of Christian morality. The desire to withdraw from the "world," even aspirations to the religious life, can stem from emotional insecurity and thus lose to a greater or lesser degree their true Christian significance. We know that many "mystical" phenomena can be expressive of neurosis rather than of divine grace. We have seen that disbelief, despair or scrupulosity can result from emotional factors. Above all, it has been indicated that the human capacity for true love can be almost extinguished by a disordered affective life.

In all these and similar cases we are to follow the basic guide of our human moral activity—our reason, enlightened by faith. It is reasonable, and thus morally good and proper, to seek natural assistance for the remedying of natural disorders. This is true and valid even though we know that by natural means alone man will never achieve either natural perfection or supernatural sanctification. *It is the love of God above all else that must integrate man both naturally and supernaturally, and without grace such a love is impossible. But grace itself will not normally have its full expression, its perfect flowering without the proper functioning of our natural powers, and in this human means are of real assistance.*

There are some who feel that the exercise of the spiritual life, the reception of the sacraments, with the grace they bring, and conformity to God's will, can solve of themselves the emotional disorders which beset us. Thus conformity to God's will, properly

understood "removes the basis for psychic depression . . . excludes fear and anxiety . . . and inferiority feelings" (Cavanagh and McGoldrick, *Fundamental Psychiatry*, Bruce, 1953, pp. 545-547). The problem, however, is that these emotional disorders present serious obstacles to the work of the sacraments; they may render practically impossible a real conformity with God's will. Indeed, conforming to God's will is the answer to these difficulties, but *not until one can conform*. The emotionally disturbed are unable to achieve this conformity, and it may even happen that the more they attempt it the more disturbed they become, and the more they withdraw from any real conformity. Such conformity to God's will, it must be remembered, is a union of man's will to God's, and thus a matter of real love. If an individual cannot love truly, his conformity with God's will is likewise thwarted.

The fact to be recognized is that emotional disorders can block and hinder the good normally to be drawn from such supernatural exercises of the spiritual life as that of making acts of conformity to the will of God. Not until obstacles are removed or difficulties lessened will the supernatural life of grace have its full development.

CHRISTMAS SONG

The wisdom of the world is sweet,
The lore of earth and sky,
But we must go to Bethlehem
To know the Whence and Why.

O Bethlehem is far to seek,
As far as heart is wild,
And we may wander many roads
Before we see the Child.

The little ones that dig the earth
Can hear the angels sing,
But we must stumble with the star
To gaze upon the King.

But all roads lead to Bethlehem,
As all roads lead to Rome,
And we shall meet the shepherds yet
And know that we are home.

J. E. P. Butler.



THE lay vocation is a sociable one. Whether he likes it or not, the lay person must fraternize. Patricia MacGill, a New York writer who has written for us before, writes about the problems of fraternal charity.

Love Your Neighbor

Patricia MacGill: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," said the psalmist. Of course, but it would have been much nearer the truth had he said, "Behold how almost impossible it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" For most of us, I think, the experience is the same: we can rise to heights of charity for a time, we can perform isolated generous actions, but it's the long pull, the day-to-day war of attrition, which wears our charity thin. It's not hard to be pleasant to a thoroughly disagreeable person for a weekend or so, but when that person is one's sister, or one's roommate, or one's marriage partner, and there's no foreseeable escape from him or her, that's when the cross really starts to hurt.

There are all sorts of spiritual pick-me-ups to be had via holy cards and magazines: remarks such as "We love Christ as much as the person we love least," "At the end of life we shall be judged in love," and "Charity never falleth away." In a certain sense these sayings are discouraging; we hate to think that we love Christ as little as that unbearable So-and-So; we cringe internally at the thought of our judgment, if it's to depend on the quality of our love; and as for our charity—we come to the dismal conclusion that it's always falling away. And there's the perennial temptation to think that in some unexplained way things were easier for the saints; that when they tossed off their dicta on love and brotherhood, they spoke of matters that were second nature to them, that somehow they were born trailing clouds of sweetness and light, that it would have been harder for them to be uncharitable than otherwise.

We know, of course, when we think about it, that the saints, and all the charitable people we know, for that matter, have had and have the same struggle as we to preserve "the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." But why is it so seemingly fruitless for us when we attempt the practice of charity? We pray with the author of the *Imitation of Christ*: "O Lord, let that become possible to me by Thy grace, which by nature seems impossible to me." We mean it as hard as we can while we're praying, but we're perfectly capable of rising from our knees and making yet another cutting remark or passing on another irresistible morsel of gossip. When will we ever learn, we say to ourselves, almost in despair.

Slipping down a steep hill

It's because there seems very little sympathy proffered to strugglers after the virtue of fraternal charity that I'm writing this article. There are a good many things written on the subject—we've all read them, and if you're like me, they cast a warm glow and you rise from reading them determined to slay your dragon. But somehow you don't—maybe you wound him, but he won't lay down, and you feel that you've let down Father ABC or Layman XYZ (obviously so much better at this sort of thing than you). Sure, there's been a casual reference in the course of what you've read that this is a hard project, but mighty little about *how* to do it. You haven't been warned that you're going to fall, not even, but nearer seventy times in the day in the pursuit of fraternal charity. There are no band-aids offered to patch you up, no sympathy in advance for the trouble you're going to have. In short, you feel that the authors of these articles are creatures of superior

mold to you, and a what's-the-use attitude is all too apt to creep up upon you.

So may I, at the outset, assure all readers that they could possibly be worse at the practice of fraternal charity than I, though there's very little I don't know about how hard it is, and that the one piece of wisdom I've salvaged out of many batterings is that you must keep on trying. Try weakly, try with the feeling that you're slipping backwards down a steep hill, try even when you're almost positive that you're going to have just as bad a day today as you did yesterday—just try. "God does not ask a perfect work but infinite desire," as the English Benedictine writer, Dom Hubert Van Zeller, is fond of saying. And if you feel that your desire is far from infinite, cheer up. Things, fortunately, look different to God than to us. And if your weak attempts at charity are for God, then you can be pretty sure that they are pleasing to Him.

For most of us, I think, charity is of the "gather up the fragments" variety. Not many of us are off converting the pagan, defying communist torture, or enduring outright prejudice against the faith. For us the fragments, which nevertheless must be gathered up lest they be lost. Some of us, happily, are not particularly uncharitable, but neither are we charitable. We *don't* but neither do we *do*. And this is not even a minimum meeting of the demands of charity. "I am come to cast fire on the earth," said Christ, "and what will I but that it be kindled?" Kindling is a positive action. Nothing happens if you do nothing. So what should be done?

charity in lay life

Here we run into a big and beautiful snag for all writers and speakers on lay spirituality. It's relatively easy to compose a rule of life for religious. After all, they're all in one place, they're all doing the same work, their daily schedule is more or less uniform, they subscribe to the ideals and way of spirituality of their founder. Living the rule is, of course, another matter, and a rigorous school of sanctity, but composing it is quite a possible thing. But how can we make even the most general suggestions for a way of life to the laity? Each man differs from his neighbors in countless ways; even the suggestion of attendance at daily Mass, of such universal obligation for members of religious communities, might be positive the wrong thing for those whose duties would place them elsewhere. Thus the complaint of lay people that they lack concrete direction as to the details of daily life. But how can it be otherwise? Prudence in the art of self-direction is, we conclude, the vital virtue needed in the lay apostolate.

Certainly prudence is needed in the practical application of the blanket principle that one must love one's neighbor. In a religious order, for example, it would be an act of virtue to accept a task even if it seemed to you an unjust assignment. This is because such decisions are in the hands of one's superior, to whom one has promised obedience. But in lay life it might easily happen that one *should* protest against an unfairly assigned job. Possibly someone is "getting away with murder" in pushing it off on you, and for the ultimate benefit of his character he shouldn't be allowed to get away with it. Or possibly the job is really too much for you and would overtax you. There are many reasons why a protest would be in order; and the example underlies the essential differences between lay and religious practices of charity.

What about the common good?

Another problem lies in the conflict which often arises between the person and the common good, and here again prudence is all-important. An unpleasant person in a club, for instance; could he be borne with for the sake of the problematical good he will gain, or for the peace of the whole group should he be asked to withdraw? The question arises again and again in houses of hospitality, where the needs of one antisocial guest must be weighed against those of the others and a decision reached as to whether the difficult one is harming the others more by his presence than he is being helped. The same thing in a slightly different (and even more complicated) form often arises in families where for one reason or another a relative is being harbored who may have a bad influence on the children, cause dissension between husband and wife, or just make the home miserable by criticism and complaint. No such decisions are easy and the one who has to make them has to scrutinize his motives. Often what one should do (in this case, get rid of a trouble-maker) is also what one wants to do and for that reason a good person is tempted to feel that he's taking the line of least resistance and should really stick up with the problem instead of resolving it. This may be true when one has only oneself to consider, but when other people enter into the case their needs, too, must be weighed and a reasonable decision made.

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developing habits of charity

With these safeguards set up are there any suggestions which can be made? St. Paul speaks of "being rooted and founded in charity (that) you may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth: to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fullness of God." That gives us the how and the why of fraternal charity. We are to become "rooted and founded in charity." That implies the formation of habits. Not a sporadic, impulsive affair, but a day-to-day conversion of heart and manners. How expressed? In patience, in kindness. Do you, for instance, allow people to tell you a story twice? Or do you cut them off with an impatient "Yes, I know, you already told me that." Embarrassing for them, don't you think? Why not let them tell the story—and even a third or fourth time.

"If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. Are you always ready with a wisecrack, unable to resist the opportunity of getting a laugh? Is that good? Not if what you say hurts someone or reflects on someone—and so much of the laughing getting repartee does.

"If I should have prophecy and should know all mysteries and all knowledge and if I should have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not charity, I am nothing": God isn't going to ask you if you graduated *summa cum laude* from college, or if you made \$10,000 a year, but He's likely to be very interested in whether you were too busy getting that *summa cum laude* to help poorer students, and in whether the \$10,000 was spent solely on yourself or whether anyone else got a share of it.

"If I should distribute all my goods to feed the poor and if I should deliver my body to be burned and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing": Red Cross, Community Chest, March of Dimes—all good things, but you have something better to give and it is yourself. And supposing you have a self that's touchy and peevish, suppose you're the sort of person people have to study, to say to themselves "I wonder what sort of mood he's in today?" and behave accordingly. You're not rooted and founded in much but yourself. Of all the ways of offending against charity I think a touchy disposition is one of the worst, especially when you think how many people it affects. Your grouchiness can ruin the happiness of a whole group, your frown can spoil the atmosphere of your office or home faster than anything else. *Cheerful*

ness is a virtue that's most noticed when it's absent. When a person's serene and happy it's not commented on, but when he isn't, certainly is. And it provides a cause of uncharity for others too.

"Charity is patient, is kind; charity envieth not, dealeth not uncharitably, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own." I've never tried to see how far you could get in a conversation without using the word "I"? I assure you no one will miss it!

"Is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil." Is there anyone nicer than the person who always puts the best interpretation on things, who, when he hears a bad report, can always think of an explanation: "Maybe he was tired . . . didn't feel well . . . there must be something we don't know about." This is not only love manifesting itself but more than likely truth. I hate to think of the times I've rashly judged someone or something, only to find out that there were good reasons for the thing being done the way it was or the person acting the way he did. It's really a safe as well as charitable rule to put the best construction possible on people and happenings, because about eighty per cent of the time the best construction is the true one.

There's another side to this thinking well of another. It is entirely likely that others are trying as hard as we to practice fraternal charity—and probably failing about as often. We are patient with ourselves and give ourselves credit for at least making an effort when we come a cropper; we certainly should do as much for our neighbors.

Living disagreeable people

The most difficult achievement, we need hardly say, is the practice of charity toward the person we can hardly stand the sight of. But "If you love those who love you, what do you; do not even the heathen this?" And again, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you; pray for them that despitefully use you." This is one of the hardest of the hard sayings of Christ. And this is where I wish lavishly to hand out that sympathy so often lacking. I sympathize, I sympathize, but this is something we must try to accomplish, this loving of those we may find not merely unpleasant but actively repugnant. When we have accomplished this, even in small part, we are likely to find for ourselves and assent not merely with our minds but with our hearts to the truth of the remainder of the Pauline quotation, the *why* of charity: "That you may be able to comprehend with all the saints, what the breadth and length and height and depth: to know also the charity of Christ, which surpasseth all knowledge, that you may be filled unto all the fulness of God."

This is a wonderful reward indeed for love of a disagreeable neighbor and it seems almost impossible that a thing such as love of Mrs. Jones next door or overbearing Mr. Smith in the office should lead to this comprehension and fulness; that the smallnesses of our daily routine, the gathered fragments, should in the end surpass all knowledge. If only we could hold on to this in the midst of the crying babies, and missed trains, and heat, and cold, and petty aggravations, and almost or completely lost temper, and short answers of our daily life, what a difference it would make. But of course part of the hardness is that we are not made so that we can constantly remember the glorious reward of charity. We have to keep plugging, to see through a glass darkly. In this lies our pain, but also our hope of glory.

And it couldn't be harder!



HERESY REFUTED

"Work is work and fun is fun,

With holiness there's no connection."

Pull yourself together, friend,

God gives you both for your perfection

BOOK REVIEWS

A Lutheran Visits Rome

TO SEE PETER
by Richard Baumann
transl. by John Oesterreicher
McKay, \$3.00

Richard Baumann, a Lutheran minister from Germany joined a Holy Year pilgrimage to Rome. In this book, written from his notes during the journey, he records his dominant impressions. Ac-

ceptance of the scriptural background of the Catholic doctrine on the shop of Rome and of the cult of the Virgin show how near the author comes to the Catholic formulation of the faith. His devotion to the historical figure of Luther; his belief that the Reformation was a providential event which brought purity to the Church, and his strangeness at being for the first time admitted to the intimacy of Catholic life remind Catholic readers that the task of approach to separated Christians is a work of love and understanding that must take into account the ethos developed in non-Catholic Christianity.

As many Lutherans will readily admit (though not all by any means), Luther's Reformation would be superfluous in the twentieth century. The Council of Trent achieved the disciplinary reform that was badly needed, and the theological schools of Catholicism—if not popular preaching and writing yet—have rid themselves of the nominalistic tendencies of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Hence the dilemma: Luther answered a call from God when he reformed the Church, but is the continued existence of a Lutheran Church still providentially justified? The most common, though highly questionable, way of solving the dilemma would seem to be this: the co-existence of the Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches enables them, through a dialectic of mutual inspiration and competition, to remain spiritually pure. Richard Baumann, however, does not suggest this way out; he rather accepts, somewhat illogically, the dilemma, hoping that God will make his will of unity clearer to the Evangelical Churches: "On us Evangelical Christians there has been enjoined a work of fellowship, and already it is in progress: to reorientate our reformed creed according to the Word of God. What God Himself began for us when He permitted the battle of the Evangelical Church during those twelve years of Hitler, may His grace continue and perfect in us" (p. 61). Hence we Evangelical Christians must let ourselves be built again into the one fellowship that is according to the word of Christ, let ourselves be incorporated again into the one people of God wandering on this earth" (p. 71).

In this background, the book is to be read as the examen of conscience of a Lutheran confronted by Catholic truth. The translator, Father Oesterreicher, has added doctrinal notes that will help to set things in their right perspective and correct some expressions or appreciations. The Catholic reader will no doubt be helped to sympathy by the occasional bewilderment of the good Lutheran pastor finding himself in a crowd of Catholic pilgrims and having to put up with ways so alien to himself. But what of the Protestant reader? On the whole the author is careful to argue from the Protestant standpoint of utter fidelity to the Word of God perceived in the Bible. Yet the Protestant reader will wince at the emotionalism of some pages. He will refuse to be convinced on some points, as when the

Rosary is justified as biblical (for this is stretching to such an extent the biblical principle of Protestantism that it may be made to cover anything) or the practice of indulgences as implied in the communion of saints (for Luther condemned indulgences from another point of view, namely because it may foster a conception of grace as something due to one's good works).

Mr. Baumann is realistic on the prospects for Christian reunion. He knows that it can be brought about only by strenuous efforts, on all sides, of fidelity to God and love for men. And he outlines the true program for a Catholic ecumenism when he writes: "Catholic justice towards the Reformation and Protestant conversion to the fullness of Christ's Church, its entire shape according to Scripture, rise and fall together."

REV. GEORGE H. TAVARD, A.A.

More Than a Travelogue

AN AUTUMN IN ITALY
By Sean O'Faolain
Devin-Adair, \$3.50

In this follow-up to his *Summer in Italy* Mr. O'Faolain takes us to Sicily and Southern Italy where, in contrast to the richer North, "the eye is less richly fed."

though the heart is more deeply touched."

In traveling through Southern Italy one has to remember that this region was foreign-dominated for centuries until the unification of Italy and thus hadn't the chance to develop. The South is mainly agricultural with few large cities other than Naples and Palermo, but the land has been owned by wealthy barons who in some instances have never even set foot on the estates from which they derive their income. The plight of the vast majority of farm laborers, crowded into tiny villages, whose work is seasonal and thus provides only a bare existence, has been unheeded over the years.

Mr. O'Faolain starts his journey in Naples and describes vividly and terrifyingly the abject poverty hidden behind the attractive tourist quarter along the Bay. He was fortunate enough to be in Naples on the Feast of St. Januarius and was actually present in the Cathedral when the liquification of the Saint's blood took place. The account Mr. O'Faolain gives of the behavior of the Neapolitans on this Feast Day and in turn of his reactions to their goings-on is most interesting.

From Naples our author travels to the islands of Capri and Ischia, across the mainland through ancient towns along the Adriatic Sea and the Gulf of Taranto, over to Sicily and then back to Calabria, visiting cathedrals, ruins, palaces and slums.

It is in Calabria that Mr. O'Faolain finds that at last something is being attempted to ease the misery of at least one corner of Southern Italy. For here he was witness to the methods by which the present government is working out a land reform with American assistance. The chapters devoted to Calabria are most worthwhile and informative.

At times Mr. O'Faolain's details and repetitions become tiresome, especially when he is on the subject of Norman-Romanesque architecture. It is from his recordings of conversations with the people—and wherever he went he struck up many acquaintances—that we feel we are really learning to know the character and way of life of the Southern Italian. We can only hope that the reforms begun in Calabria will be spread through the rest of the farming area and that an incredibly patient people will be rewarded.

ELIZABETH A. DOHEN

The Vow of Obedience

OBEDIENCE
By Various Authors
Transl. from the French
Newman, \$3.75

"We must take care," says Louis de Sainte-Thérèse, O.C.D. in the last chapter of this book, "not to be satisfied with . . . the repetition of a formula of whose requirements and richness we have no real understanding." Since there is a danger of this for those who take the vows of religion, the history, purposes, erroneous ideas, rewards of religious obedience, as well as other matters relating to its observance (which are the study of the twenty-one authors whose papers form the various chapters of this book) are well worth the consideration of the reader.

The first three chapters discuss religious obedience as practiced by the Fathers of the Desert; its predominant place in the spiritual formation of religious in the monasteries of Sts. Basil and Benedict; "a new juridical type of religious obedience" in the thirteenth century; and the Ignatian type which the author of the third chapter calls "the special contribution of the sixteenth century to the doctrine and practice of religious obedience."

Father A. Motte, O.P., lists as the highest purpose of the vow the immolation to God of our greatest good, our free will. Its perfection consists, he says, "in entering totally into the will of the superior . . . forestalling his commands . . . seizing with predilection on painful occasions of obedience." He discusses the Ignatian ideal, defended by Father P. E. Lesson, S.J., which would include in this perfection the obedience of the judgment. In this the Dominican sees a possibility of falsifying the judgment so that "the endeavor to give greater perfection to the act of obedience will involve in point of fact a violation of truth." Blind obedience, which even beginners are so often exhorted to practice, is called by Abbé Kothern a virtue which can blossom only under the direction of the Holy Ghost and a subject of advanced holiness."

In its earlier stages obedience must serve as "a schooling in spiritual progress" which Father Motte lists as another purpose for taking the vow. In that case it is a means to an end and, if the school is to form saints, the right to demand obedience must belong to those who are capable of making it serve that purpose. Canon Guiot bemoans the number of saints who have misfired for lack of enlightened and liberal direction." The author of the paper "Total Surrender" declares that often "the postulant undergoes, in the name of the perfection of obedience, an automatic psychological disruption." In a departmentalized world religious are sometimes commanded into a mechanized activism which can be disastrous to the spirit of contemplation. Unless authority makes provision for prayer in its most sublime form, for a vigorous thought life devoted fearlessly to search for truth, for living which is more in harmony with the rhythm of nature, it is not probable that obedience will serve what Father Ple, O.P., calls its most pressing purpose: "the psychological and spiritual maturity of the obedient subject."

The social nature of religious life is a third reason for obedience to authority. In "Theology of Religious Obedience" the warning is given that unless that obedience is exercised from supernatural motives it "has no purpose at all. It is still capable of holding together a community, it might even cause it to prosper materially; but religious life that no longer produces the fruit for which it was instituted, no longer justifies its ex-

istence. . . . If there is no higher ambition present than seeing a college or a hospital successful and prosperous, religious profession is but a dead weight." The grave danger of using obedience as a means of exploitation instead of sanctification lies particularly in this third purpose for the taking of the vow.

Some of the authors warn us that genuineness of obedience is not always discernible. Some practice it gladly "in order to escape their private responsibilities." In the chapter "Psychology of the Beginning of the Novitiate" the author asserts that the immature novice can go far astray in the matter of obedience that often there is "no place for God. It is in the love of our Mother that the novice lives and moves and has her being. She is the creature of carnal love, instead of being the child of God." Another author warns us that "the most supernaturally obedient soul is not necessarily the most observant, the most faultless, the most urgent or the most pliable." In a plea for the encouragement by superiors of initiative, Henry Bissonier speaks against the "dangerous inertia which merely counterfeits obedience."

There is much interesting and helpful matter to enlighten the reader who makes a thoughtful study of this book.

SISTER M. DULCIDA, S.S.N.D.

"Are Nuns Like Us?"

THE SHEPHERD'S TARTAN
By Sister Mary Jean Dorcy, O.P.
Sheed & Ward, \$2.50

The Shepherd's Tartan is a delightful story of the experiences of Sister Mary Jean Dorcy as a member of the Dominican Order, written in

very fluid and sprightly style but with a great lack of depth. One cannot but wish the author had not devoted so much time to the humorous incidents that occurred, and a little more time to the serious aspects of being a nun. Indeed, if the author's intention was to inform us of convent life, she has fallen far short of accomplishing her task. Perhaps the reviewer is still under the influence of Thomas Merton's *Sign of Jonas*, but it seems that many of the adventures and incidents related in this book are not peculiar to the nun's life nor to the life of a teaching nun especially. Every teacher can relate the amusing lapses of memory and confusions that occur in the minds of her young angelic students, although not many are able to relate them as well. However, Sister Mary Jean does try to present some aspects of convent life—the community or family as the basis of convent life, convent rules, love of God as the reason for entering the convent, etc.—but these and many other points could and should have been presented with more depth and explanation. If the author intended to influence the minds of the people who live under the impression created by such books as *Maria Monk* which presents horrible pictures of convent life, she certainly should have devoted more time to the explanation and routines of convent life. If Sister Mary Jean intended to show us how normal or perhaps how like secular life convent life is, the question which comes to mind is "Why?" Is it this similarity which makes convent life so wonderful? Or rather, is it not the very divergence from secular life and the sacrifices commensurate with it that make convent life such a difficult life at first, but such a glorious and blessed life at all times?

CECILIA SURACE

Important Beginning

TOWARDS A LIVING TRADITION

Edited by Justus George Lawler

Pio Decimo, \$1.50 and \$2.50

of Dietrich von Hildebrand's *foreword*, this series is intended "to aid us to penetrate into the spirit of our Liturgy." This intention is particularly ambitious and worthwhile in view of the editor's own statement that "the life of the spirit has not flourished noticeably in the American climate. Both our age and our environment seem inimical to that holy leisure which is the condition for all fruitful penetration into reality."

The importance of the intention is matched, in the first book, by the excellence of the achievement. Though this type of work seems destined to appeal to comparatively few today, it certainly is "must" reading for those enlightened Catholics, clergy and laity, interested in the Liturgical movement.

This book contains three essays: "The Mystery of Worship" by Jean Wild, O.S.B., "The Loss of Continuity" by Justus George Lawler, and "Modern Man and the Religious Arts" by Pie R. Régamey, O.P. Each essay is thought-provoking; the collection is a positive contribution to our understanding and appreciation of the Liturgy and the Liturgical Life. Reading essays such as these helps to make us aware of how far we have drifted from traditional Christianity into an adolescent mediocrity bereft of spirit, of mystery, of beauty.

To treat selected ideas in a short review such as this seems entirely inadequate, for, taken out of context, such ideas may appear distorted. Furthermore, this is the type of book one tends to quote from—from beginning to end—rather than paraphrase or summarize.

BRENDAN O'GRADY

Worker - Priest

RUE NOTRE DAME

By Daniel Pezeril

Sheed & Ward, \$2.50

This book was written by a young French priest, the one in fact who ministered to George Bernanos on his deathbed. Hueing to the diary form of writing the author relates (fictionally, of course) the thoughts of an aged and retired Canon of the Paris Cathedral who, after fifty years of priesthood, is taught by a young worker-priest how much a waste of time and energy those fifty years were and how ineffectual his administrative accomplishments really were. Incidentally the old man is inspired by the example of his young tutor to perform a corporal work of mercy in the last week of his life.

Abbé Pezeril most likely intended a point to be made, and if that point includes the lesson that priests can lose the meaning of their priesthood in the welter of administrative functions sometimes substituted for teaching, serving, inspiring, and sanctifying, the book achieves its purpose. However, unless the priesthood of France be more bankrupt than I know it to be or than Cardinal Suhard admitted it to be, then the point made is vast exaggeration.

Whatever be the sickness which afflicts the Church of France is not mine to say. The young Abbé (ordained sixteen years) does not prove

the necessity of worker-priests, even though they may have some passing usefulness. He does validly criticize the seminary training of parish priests and points up the necessity of some kind of reformation of parochial organization.

However, the arrogance of some of these worker-priests (implied only in a light-handed fashion here) is probably responsible (as much responsible as the dangers of the work for priests themselves) for the Holy See's recent concern over the experiment.

Bruce Marshall writes a very brilliant and satirical bit of whimsy about the Church of France in his introduction which is more to the point than the remaining chapters.

REV. GEORGE A. KELLY

Integral Catholicism

THE CHURCH AND THE CATHOLIC
and
THE SPIRIT OF THE LITURGY
By Romano Guardini
Sheed & Ward, \$2.50

This is a reprint of two small books bound together. The first is an eloquent plea for a Catholic community as opposed to religious isolation, the second

and an equally eloquent exposition of the Liturgy as the communal worship of the Church. The titles of these works are unusually apt. *The Church and The Catholic* is a clear and loving explanation of what the Church means to the Catholic, and the Catholic to the Church—the development and enrichment of personality in communion with the Church, and the flowering of the Church in the perfection, individual and social, of its members. *The Spirit of The Liturgy* is not a detailed description of the *corpus* of the Liturgy but a penetrating study of its essential meaning. Of corrective value to contemporary activism is the final chapter on "The Primacy of the Logos over the Ethos." Altogether this is a small book but it is not fractional. It is a concentrated expression of integral Catholicism. Those who know Father Guardini will be glad that he is being kept in print. Those who do not should begin with this book. Father Guardini exemplifies excellently that richness and depth which is the distinguishing mark of German religious writing. "Religion," he says, "needs civilization." Father Guardini has it, and the North American Church could use it. We have our own glories. The European does not ignore them. Nor does he ignore his own scandals. But we cannot live much longer on the innocence of adolescence. Either we learn the virtues of maturity or perish.

J. E. P. BUTLER

A Woman's World?

WOMEN TODAY
Edited by Elizabeth Bragdon
Bobbs-Merrill, \$4.00

We have all heard so much sense and nonsense about the modern woman—what's wrong with her and why—that it is good to find a book that looks at

her squarely and sees that, in spots, there is much to be said for her.

The book is composed of articles written by representative figures in such fields as teaching, anthropology and psychiatry. It is broad in scope and in viewpoint. However, there is no unifying thread—save the subject. I did not find this a drawback. Instead it's stimulating—so much so that I'm using lots of self-control not to write a book instead of a review.

The teacher who wrote the chapter "Marriage as a Career" lit on a familiar theme: "What I regret is the growing belief that this (marriage) is not enough for the average woman, that she should also, if possible, have a career to fill her life." She says that lack of her husband's companionship is due to over-emphasizing the bread-winning aspect of his responsibility is partly to blame. Thereby the woman is left with the rearing of the children, as well as the intellectual and aesthetic development of her family. Men and women are blamed for our matriarchal culture in America! Further, when we think of marriage today we don't, as the writer suggests, think of it as a social institution—we are more individualistic in our approach. We build up our little nest and let the rest of the world go by. Romantic love is too often our measuring rod for entering into a life-long relationship. We fail to think of a mate as one with whom we can develop—as a total person—and with whom we can best make our contribution to society. Similarity in tradition, background or congeniality of taste and character is too often given second place in our pre-marital considerations. The writer claims that we have lots to learn from the European brand of match-making. There are really many other good ideas in this article—for example, we no longer think of the difference in the sexes, there is a loss of permanence and therefore the security of marriages, it's an experiment, not a life-long partnership. There is an old Christian concept of manhood wrapped away in the writer's finishing lines: "I am inclined to think that the price of confidence, of the full sharing of a man's life, of a large measure of self-renunciation, and this is more difficult if a woman has a career."

In another article Margaret Mead decries the fact that women are confined to household drudgeries—and goes on to say that there is no reason why these duties should be considered the special function of the female of the species. I wonder about the social chaos and the domestic conflict which might well result if we took seriously her solution to what she sees as a common problem: "A climate of opinion that ceases to regard married women as if they were inherently different from other human beings, that regards marriage as the privilege of all human beings, that regards homemaking as a job for any pair of parents who take it on, would have the same stabilizing effect on women's present confused discontent." A climate of opinion in itself is important only because it results in change. Once parenthood is regarded as a joint job for both parents and men are no longer regarded as persons to whom a certain amount of drudgery is biologically appropriate, we can make the inventions required to take a good part of the drudgery out of the home." If that be the mentality I think we have lost our appreciation for the full implications of rearing a family—how broadening, stimulating, enriching it can be to make a home and mold little minds and hearts. Dissatisfaction with one's mate, or lack of femininity in one's psychological make-up, or wrong perspective on the place and dignity of manual work can, I think, be the basic causes for discontent as a homemaker.

There are a couple of intriguing articles anonymously authored. The first of one is compelling enough—"Ten Years after the Divorce. I Would Not Divorce Him Now." The second article is fabulous. It's called "The Single Woman's Dilemma" and it is the last word in amorality, justifying her illicit love affairs because of woman's need to love and be

loved, this single woman says, "My code, so far as wives are concerned, that I will not try to break up another woman's marriage and that I will not deceive the wife of a man I love any more than is absolutely necessary. I should prefer not to know her, merely because I like to be sincere and frank with people. I have sworn, too, that I will never permit myself to have an intimate relationship with a man if I have been friends first of all with his wife. In that case I should owe her my first loyalty." One can imagine this woman developing with an equal degree of logic and conviction a thesis on the justification of murder.

A variety of other subjects concerned with womanhood are treated. A psychiatrist demonstrates what can go wrong in the business of maturing through the way in which the psychological umbilical cord is or is not broken, a widow talks about the loneliness and difficulty of adjusting to that state, another writer develops the mother-in-law problem, glamorous girls are dissected, and the seemingly out of date question "to college educate or not to college educate women" is answered to my satisfaction. Some crucial aspects (for example, raising children and being the spiritual inspiration to them and to husbands) of fulfilling woman's role in society have been underdeveloped. But I think it is a book to be read—one which gives us many good ideas to consider, and many bad ones which will be recognized as such and will serve to re-affirm our basic convictions and highest ideals.

JOAN GREGORY

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